

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 253

UD 024 653

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TITLE The Functionalist Tradition and Comparative Education.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 38p.; In: Comparative and International Studies and the Theory and Practice of Education. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Australian Comparative and International Education Society (11th, Hamilton, New Zealand, August 21-24, 1983). See UD 024 646.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Research; *Educational Theories; History; *Modernization; *Sociology; *Systems Analysis; Theories
IDENTIFIERS *Durkheim (Emile); *Functionalism; *Parsons (Talcott)

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to articulate some of the basic theoretical assumptions underlying functionalism, by viewing some of the major historical chapters in the development of modern functionalist theory, and by placing the theory in a longer historical perspective. Historical continuities are argued between Durkheim and Parsons, and between Durkheim and important intellectual forbears. The common assumptions derived from the study of functionalism are then applied to a consideration of exemplars of educational research in the field of modernization theory, in an attempt to explain the direction given by the adoption of functionalist tenets. The paper includes a critique of some overt and covert assumptions of functionalist educational research and suggests some avenues for other forms of research. (Author)

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THE FUNCTIONALIST TRADITION AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

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Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian
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THE FUNCTIONALIST TRADITION AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

ANTHONY R. WELCH

This paper attempts to articulate some of the basic theoretical assumptions underlying functionalism, by viewing some of the major historical chapters in the development of modern functionalist theory, and also by placing the theory in a longer historical perspective. Historical continuities are argued, not only between Durkheim and Parsons, but between Durkheim and important intellectual forbears. The common assumptions derived from the study of functionalism are then applied to a consideration of exemplars of educational research in the field of modernization theory, in an attempt to explain the direction given by the adoption of functionalist tenets. The paper includes a critique of some overt and covert assumptions of functionalist educational research and suggest some avenues for more reasonable forms of research.

The structural-functional school have provided one of the most important logics of research in the twentieth century, and their influence on research in the social sciences, including education, has been profound. Although the locus classicus for modern functionalism is generally taken to be the work of Talcott Parsons, in particular his detailed arguments on action, the starting point for twentieth century functionalism is the work of Emile Durkheim, whose reworking of St. Simonian and Comteian themes into a new set of prescriptions for scientific social research proved to be a fountainhead for modern functionalist theory. In Durkheim's work we witness a more contemporary example of the hallowed positivist quest of the creation of a 'natural science of society';¹ indeed Durkheim acknowledged Comte, Montesquieu and Condorcet as founders of a prescientific positivism. His method however is more reminiscent of Bacon in stressing the development of knowledge through accretion; the establishment of social laws not different in kind from those in the natural sciences, by inductive generalizations from collections of facts. Sociology, then, like other sciences was progressive - advancing slowly if remorselessly towards the establishment of objective principles - and it might, under the beneficent influence of large-scale inductivist empirical methods, even prove possible to establish the authenticity of Comte's law of the three stages, given sufficient

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resources.² Other connections between Comte and Durkheim include a bifurcation into statics (functional explanation) and dynamics (historical explanation) and a reliance upon a biological analogy to establish sociology, although of course these concepts were common to much nineteenth century social thought, as for example with Spencer's work. But in Durkheim's claim that a social science could separate the normal from the pathological in society, and in his opposition to (pathological) revolutionary social change, he depended upon the Comteian-style scientifically based postulate that all progressive change was incremental, cumulative. Revolution was a symptom of a failure to achieve or maintain progressive social change: Durkheim's solidarity was Comte's consensus.

Durkheim's programme has been expressed in terms of three major, linked goals: to establish sociology as a strict science; to articulate the basis for the unity of the social sciences; and to provide the basis for social integration ("modern society's civil religion"³), in the best traditions of St. Simon and Comte:

"The French sociological tradition begun by St. Simon, followed by Comte, ... and Durkheim has a common denominator in its repugnance of political upheavals, of group struggles for power, of chicanery and civil strife; the tradition, in contra-distinction to Marxist sociology, is to make sociology a healing and stabilizing science, one that will find a viable basis for restoring social consensus, and for enhancing societal integration." ⁴

The centre of this sociological confection was of course a sedative morality; its genealogy can be directly traced back to St. Simon's late vision of a "New Christianity" or Comte's later religious manifestations of positivism, both concerned (as was Durkheim) with replacing the inherent conservatism of the Catholic religion with a more progressive alternative. A new "civil religion" wholly in accord with natural science, and which would provide a solid foundation for a new science of mankind, a new (positive) moral world-order, was

to be the result. Durkheim's 'social facts' were, for him, moral phenomena, and moral concepts were at the basis of directed action. It was the morality of the social world which was its major distinguishing feature, marking it out from the world of nature. This helps clarify the other sense in which Durkheim was an heir to the positivist traditions of St. Simon and Comte: sociology was to be positive, in the Comteian sense of being constructive and organic, not critical and revolutionary as with the Enlightenment philosophes.⁵

Talcott Parsons' debt to Durkheim is both explicit and acknowledged, as for example in the latter's monumental Structure of Social Action, wherein Durkheim is seen as providing a solution to the Hobbesian problem of 'order'.⁶ Hobbes' argument for order is based on the need for reason in the form of a social contract by which men restrain their natural liberty, ceding it to a ruler in return for security. "It is only through the authority of this sovereign that the (natural) war of all against all is held in check, and order and security maintained."⁷ In this way, no man may gain unlimited power to command the services or the recognition of others. Here again we see the importance of the seventeenth century context, where the secularization of social thought raised the problem of the (normative) basis of social order, and individual rights, at a time when notions of human nature (a secularized version of the theological notion of man as originally evil) paralleled the rise of the Newtonian system. "Hence there was a strong tendency to assimilate these deterministic laws of nature, in logical type and in part also in content, to the current deterministic theories of physical nature - ... The first great example of this type of deterministic thinking in the social field is Hobbes."⁸

There are still other connections between modern, post-war structural-functionalists and Durkheim, one of the more important being the concept of social pathology and the frequent use of a biological analogy to clarify this concept. This analogy is at the basis of functionalist theory, and is crucial to an understanding of functionalist explanations of social pathology. For example

Durkheim's discussion of the notion of 'normal' and 'pathological' relies on arguments taken from biology, in which normal is a measure of frequency within a species (higher or lower). Normal or average is seen by Durkheim as being equivalent to health for a particular species and thus "every deviation from this standard of health is a morbid phenomenon."⁹ And this law is exactly the same in sociology as in biology: "it has never occurred to anyone to assume that what is normal for a mollusc, is normal also for a vertebrate."¹⁰ The morbidity or pathology of a given species is not part of their normal nature for Durkheim, and is not related to the conditions for their general (normal) existence.

This relates to the second major continuity of the functionalist school, which again demonstrates the dependence on a biological analogy: that of evolution. Durkheim's concept of the health of a species raises the question of how this state of health came to be the norm in that setting. Clearly the current norm of health is the most useful or beneficial, since otherwise the health of the species, indeed the future of the species itself would be imperilled. And this current state has come about through gradual adaptation to circumstance. Here Durkheim answers his own question: "How could (normal characteristics)... have maintained themselves under so great a variety of circumstances if they had not enabled the individual better to resist the elements of destruction?"¹¹ Clearly the greater frequency of normal characteristics, as opposed to pathological varieties, is proof of their greater usefulness. The circularity of the argument - what is normal is successful; what is successful is normal - appears to escape Durkheim's attention. He simply insists that phenomena such as behaviour patterns must continue to adapt to changing external conditions. If they do not, they cease to become 'normal'. This reinforces the view that "health .. is recognizable by the perfect adaptation of the organism to its environment",¹² or at least that social phenomena are normal when most commonly present at a given stage in the development of that species. Crime, or other forms of deviance, must needs be morbid, pathological or 'dysfunctional' from this perspective, although Durkheim accepts a degree of crime as necessary, and argues it can help reaffirm conventional collective sentiments of the majority.

The last major link in the functionalist chain of thought is the emphasis on the unitary, integrating, systemic quality of sociology, a view which as Gouldner argues, is a living link to 'Sociological Positivism', and whose clearest modern exponent is Talcott Parsons. Parsons' organicism, expressed in the notion that (an understanding of) the anatomy of the whole must be prior to the interpretation of any individual element, and his view that each element only gains significance in terms of what it contributes to other parts and therefore the whole are sensible in the organic traditions of Comte and St. Simon, and crucially, Durkheim. So indeed is Parsons' taxonomic fervour.

The concept of system, then, is an integral part of contemporary functionalism, although more evident in the work of some from this school than others. R. K. Merton, while affirming its importance, tends not to use it explicitly while Parsons' use is more overt. Its meaning and methodological significance is made clear in the following citation: "The most essential condition of successful dynamic analysis is continual and systematic reference of every problem to the state of the system as a whole .. Functional significance in this context is inherently teleological. A process or set of conditions either 'contributes' to the maintenance (or development) of the system, or it is 'dysfunctional' in that it detracts from the integration and effectiveness of the system. It is thus the functional reference of all particular conditions and processes to the state of the total system as a going concern which provides the logical equivalent of simultaneous equations in a fully developed system of analytical theory." ¹³

Apart from the heavy emphasis on the implicit defence of the status-quo, there is an immediate by-product in this Parsonsian formulation. By excluding aspects of the physical, material and ecological environment, as also of man's own physical functioning and constitution, Parsons achieves a gain in formal terms, (those elements which remain within his model of the social system are now the only ones capable of accounting for action) but only at the expense of an important loss in terms of heuristic, explanatory potential. Logical elegance, as Gouldner points out, is no substitute for empirical potency.

The social system, as described by Parsons, bears little direct resemblance to the concept as employed in the Marxist tradition, where social antagonisms are paramount, and are related to structural contradictions. On the contrary, the Parsonsian 'system' is conceived as an integrated whole (again the biological analogy may be usefully employed here) in which a Durkheimian differentiation ¹⁴ is understood as all originating from one primal stock, or element. This 'oneness' which Parsons imparts to the world is also particularly manifest in the image of social groups employed throughout. This is done in the same a priori manner in which the social system is seen as unitary; no empirical stain is allowed to blot Parsons' copybook. Reciprocity, interdependence, complementarity are the kinds of terms used to explain social interaction, and the relationship which pertains between different elements of the whole social system. The view of social system implied by these assumptions is for Parsons anti-deterministic (vis á vis his view of Marxism, for example ¹⁵), but clearly again affirms the unitary view of the social system. The bias inherent in this approach is immediately apparent if we make the opposite assumption of relative functional autonomy of individual parts. Indeed this is perfectly plausible, since although it is possible to talk of a specific system-integrative imperative of certain parts of the system which align themselves with the interests of the whole, these intrinsic forces will tend to be opposed by forces designed to preserve a degree of autonomy for specific interests or parts. ¹⁶

The question of interests is also relevant to a consideration of the normative dimension to social action in Parsons. The moral basis of Durkheim's 'social facts' is here conceived as the 'normative orientation of action', in which action is seen as inherently teleological. "A normative orientation is fundamental to the schema of action in the same sense that space is fundamental to that of classical mechanics; in terms of the given conceptual scheme there is no such thing as action except as effort to conform with norms just as there is no such thing as motion except as change of location

in space." ¹⁷ Indeed a normative direction for action is, for Parsons, a necessary property of rationality, conceived of as guided by valid knowledge. The relationship of norms to action can even be expressed in terms of rules, since norms provide parameters within which (a range of) action can occur. A businessman may be guided, in performing a transaction, by the normative rule of honesty which then provides definite limits to the action he may undertake. The clear relevance of interest in respect of a normative orientation of action is seen, although not very clearly by Parsons, when we recognize that different parts of a 'system' will vary in their degree of commitment to that system's moral code; indeed the degree of allegiance exhibited will to a large degree vary with the position which has been negotiated by that part, and its stance vis á vis the concept of autonomy, and with the time at which it occurs. There may be debate about which norm applies in a given situation, which again reinforces the view that, "What one conceives to be moral, tends to vary with one's interests." ¹⁸ This is not recognized by Parsons who argues, on the contrary that the very structure of social systems is gained through the institutionalized 'normative culture'. Moreover, this culture exists hierarchically, and is passed on in descending order from society - "the highest order concrete system of interaction treated as theoretically relevant for the analytical purposes of sociology" ¹⁹ - through various forms of collectivity-structure, to the individual. This leads straight to the view that units of a system, such as individuals, which do not obey the overall normative standards of the community are necessarily deviant.

A negative view of change becomes more explicit when we turn to the question of system-maintenance in Parsons. However, the view of the centrality of evolution in Durkheim is somewhat attenuated in Parsons, although this depends to a degree on which part of the Parsonian corpus one concentrates upon. Certainly the emphasis on normalcy is immediately apparent in both, but in Parsons the allegiance tends to be more to the biological concept of homeostasis ²⁰ as a model for system maintenance. It is important here, however, to analytically distinguish Parsons' view of interdependence, as briefly reviewed above, from the concept of equilibrium since, as

Gouldner points out, while equilibrium implies interdependence, the reverse is not necessarily implied.²¹ Again however, as with Durkheim, the analysis focusses upon the process by which systems maintain a harmonious existence in relation to their environment. "In focussing on social system equilibrium, Parsons' concern is with the manner in which patterns of interaction are stabilized and unchanged, or on how, when some changes do occur, still others will result whose effect is to limit the first changes or return the situation to what it had been."²² Change and social contradiction seem marginal on this view, indeed Parsons' assumption seems to be that, once established, a mutually satisfying interaction will simply maintain itself: "the complementarity of role expectations, once established, is not problematical ... No special mechanisms are required for the explanation of the maintenance of complementary interaction-orientation."²³ No empirical evidence is presented for this view, and a priori there seems little reason to postulate this feature. Uninterrupted conformity of expectations will more likely lead to some strain, or apathy, and hence change. Indeed Gouldner argues that conformity contains within it the seeds of its own destruction, since a glut of conformity may well lead to some change in expectation, and thus a degree of disequilibrium.

Of course the very assumption of mutual gratification of systemic expectations is, for Parsons, partially contingent upon the assumption that Alter and Ego both have, that the other's expectations are legitimate. In other words, an assumption of a common moral code is written into the interaction equation. But again, morality encompasses a degree of tension (why have a moral injunction, unless as constraint; which then implies that someone may well desire to act in opposition to the injunction?); nevertheless the notion of equilibrium is still the goal, and failure to achieve this goal is seen by Parsons as a negative result. It is presumably for this reason that "...structural change" can be categorized together with "dissolution as a boundary-maintaining system (analogous to biological death for the organism), or the consolidation of some impairment leading to the establishment of secondary structures of a 'pathological' character,"²⁴ as possible outcomes of this adaptive failure. Perhaps the major assumptions of Parsons' system of action, is captured in his articulation of

'Pattern Maintenance', which embodies the "imperative of maintaining the stability of the patterns of institutional culture defining the structure of the system," involving the "internalization" of the normative pattern "in the structure of .. (the individuals).. personality." ²⁵ Systemic stability is the aim, in the face of potential disruption posed by changing values, and "mechanisms that tend to protect .. order" ²⁶ need to be sought. 'Tension management' is thus seen as an important problem, relating particularly to control over socialization mechanisms in respect of the individual. Overall, pattern maintenance "plays a part in the theory of social systems, as other systems of action, comparable to that of the concept of inertia in mechanics." ²⁷

The function of integration is also of prime importance within the Parsonsian system of action, although it implies a theory of reaction more than a theory of action. The core problem here is that of the adjustment of subsystems to more effectively contribute to the "effective functioning of the system as a whole" ²⁸ (thereby relating to the problem of pattern maintenance), and also to the external context. Legal norms are principally regulatory here, effecting internal adjustments to contribute to systemic stability; as are also "institutionalization of money and power .. (which are also) .. mechanisms of social control." ²⁹ Integration within the Parsonsian system is acknowledged to be the core concern of sociological theory, a clear indication of the overall functionalist ideology of orderly progress as expressed by Comte.

Naturalism, the view that the logics of natural and social sciences are not fundamentally dissimilar and can be based on an uncritical natural scientific tradition, is clearly fundamental to Parsons, and again finds perhaps its clearest expression in Comte. The latter's view of the hierarchy of the sciences conceives sociology, as we have seen, as firstly dependent upon the development of the lower order sciences, but having its own discrete matter to investigate (a view reiterated by Durkheim); and secondly as the final, the ultimate, and the most difficult science, the last locus of positivist illumination. This view has also served both as an apology for the inability of an as-yet-adolescent sociology to find that precision which naturalistic views of science indicated must lie at the end of all the sciences; and as a defense for an

uncritical view of the field of sociology.

All of the foregoing supports the dominant view of post-war sociology, most explicitly in the United States but also present elsewhere, that industrial society would issue in the end of ideology, as for example with Daniel Bell's work. The view was that there were essential qualities in industrial society which tended toward unilinear development, transcending class antagonism (which was seen as in Durkheim to be more legitimately associated with early industrial society) and particular forms of more radical social and political expression. This was the essence of the all-pervasive myth of the Minotaur, as Gouldner has termed it: the belief in a value-free social theory. "... The myth of a value-free sociology has been a conquering one. Today all the powers of sociology, from Parsons to Lundberg, have entered into a tacit alliance to bind us to the dogma that 'Thou shalt not commit a value judgement', especially as sociologists."³⁰ The utopian, ideological quality of this ethic, less readily apparent at a time of post-war optimism and economic progress, has been brought to light by the increasing failure-to-emerge of that putative consensus, indeed a widening gulf between the predictions of consensual socio-political theory and the reality of active social differentiation, strain and antagonism in contemporary industrialized states.³¹

Parsons' expression of the goal of value-free social inquiry is based upon an explicit adoption of his view of the Weberian tradition, in which a distinction is made between value-reference (Wertbeziehung), which is accepted as central to the social sciences, and value-judgements (Wertungen) which cannot be considered objective, and must therefore be avoided. Facts are, in this view, unproblematic ('objective' and 'verifiable')³² and can be detailed or explained scientifically: "... once a phenomenon is descriptively given, the establishment of causal relations between it and either its antecedents or its consequences is possible only through the application, explicitly or implicitly, of a formal schema of proof that is independent of any value system, except the value of scientific truth."³³ The formal scheme of logical objective proof, as Parsons terms it, is the fixed and unchanging (and presumably unchallengeable) point of reference from which we can judge specific theories in the sciences. Overall, Parsons seems to be making a rather fine distinction here. In social inquiry, he holds, research

is based upon the notion of interest, by which he means the relevance of social phenomena and action to those values which the researcher holds to be important. Although this is the selective organizing principle for data choice in the social sciences, and although rationality of action as we have seen is predicated upon a normative orientation for Parsons, he still insists we are not justified in making value-judgements in social research. It is as though having admitted value into the understanding of social phenomena, it is now excluded again. For Parsons it appears we can simply shed our values like our clothes, despite having been brought to study a particular problem by those same values.

Clearly however, one value which Parsons was quite unable to discard was that of rationality in the form of a reliance upon the 'scientific' application of appropriate means to a given end. Science is conceived here as the "rational achievement par excellence" and thus its procedures ought to be adopted as the paradigm for social action. Thus the overall criterion for rationality is conceived in the following fashion: "Action is rational in so far as it pursues ends possible within the conditions of the situation, and by the means which, among those available to the actor, are intrinsically best adapted to the end for reasons understandable and verifiable by positive empirical science."³⁴ The 'end' in this formula is accepted as "given, without inquiry as to its rationality or 'reasonableness' "³⁵ Thus there is an explicit acceptance of scientific logic and the norm of the "intrinsic means-end relationship"³⁶ as guarantors of rationality. Action is only rational in so far as it is scientifically demonstrable that, given the limitations of knowledge available, the means will bring about the stated ends, ends which Parsons argues are not to be investigated in terms of their character. This means-ends orientation in Parsons derives to a considerable degree from the concept of Zweckrationalität in Max Weber, and has received considerable critical attention from, inter-alia, Feyerabend and Habermas; we shall again encounter such preoccupations with rationality and efficiency shortly in our treatment of modernization theory.

There have been many variations upon the theme of functionalism, not all of them as static in their assumptions as Parsons.³⁷ Many,

if not most, adopted an evolutionary perspective in their work, in which functions of the system determine structures.³⁸ Most adopted, with variation, a reasonably uncritical system-concept in their work, although some began to acknowledge the possibility of negative consequences of particular behaviour. This recognition gave rise, respectively, to Merton's elaboration of 'dysfunctional', and Levy's consequent attempt to systematize the concept of function: 'eufunctional' for patterns which have positive effects on system maintenance and equilibrium, and 'dysfunctional' for negative patterns.³⁹ But overall, the concept of a homeostatic, balanced system tended to dominate the earlier Durkheimian emphasis on evolution, the exception perhaps being functionalist explanation of the process of modernization. Moore sums up this historical shift away from the developmental perspective, and its implications for functionalist research practice: "Despite the disclaimers of defenders of the faith, functionalism has largely eschewed dynamics. The course of functionalist analysis, among both anthropologists and sociologists, veered from Durkheim's muted evolutionary orientation to 'synchronic', cross-sectional analysis. Not only was the older evolutionism rejected, but also virtually all sequential patterns."⁴⁰

But the concept of a stable system nevertheless deployed concepts taken from the evolutionary armoury. In particular, the concept of 'natural selection', appeared common to most explanations of how specific sub-systems either survived (because they contributed to systemic viability) or perished (because they did not). A similar analysis could be made of whole societies which were in competition, or in terms of their interaction with their environment. We need simply note at this stage the assumption, inbuilt in this approach, of the inherent, a priori nature of functional prerequisites of a social system, which need to be fulfilled if the system is to survive. And these functional requisites did not simply include biological imperatives (such as the need for adequate reproduction, and infant care) but other needs such as role-differentiation, role-assignment, patterns of authority, specialization, and even shared cognitive orientations, or definitions of the situation, which then avoid conflict. Even more interestingly, we notice control of disruptive behaviour, adequate socialization, adequate institutionalization, regulation of both choice of means and expression of the

affective dimension as further prerequisites.⁴¹ This affirmation of the importance of orderly compliance or "social control"⁴² (whether positive or negative) is a central and insistent feature of the functionalist school.

The social system, however, does not appear in a single, universal form, and Parsons' later work, for example, was to some extent a response to insistent criticism that functionalism concentrated on abstract, taxonomic distinctions (based on assumptions regarding systemic imperatives and human nature), rather than on empirical explanations of real change and diversity among systems. But even here, Parsons ignored such important demarcation points for the study of development of systems, as writing and settled agriculture, both of which are usually argued to have important structural consequences for societies which manifest these features.⁴³ And, once again, systemic needs are postulated rather than demonstrated, and general values are assumed to be held consensually rather than viewed as problematic. Predictably, it is in this part of the Parsonsian corpus that we most clearly recognize both homeostatic and evolutionary foundations for functionalist explanation. He argues, for example, that 'human organic developments' such as manipulative hands, language and the like are vital in societal evolution and then again employs the biological analogy - "In the realm of action the gene has been replaced by the symbol as the basic structural element", - as evidence for which he cites a work on homeostatic systems analysis.⁴⁴ The overall Whiggish gloss of Parsons' stages of development in this phase of his work - primitive, intermediate, modern - shows clear allegiance to Durkheim's erroneous anthropological formulations, wherein it was stated that 'primitive' societies such as that of the Australian Aborigine were undifferentiated in structure. This spurious claim dovetailed neatly with the overall, and unexplained, assumption that increasing structural differentiation was a major feature of social evolution. Parsons' work also demonstrates much the same uncritical acceptance of evolutionary theory as it at least implied in the work of stage-theorists of modernization, such as W. W. Rostow, of the post-war period. Social evolution is employed here as both "... taxonomic device .. and .. dynamic principle.." ⁴⁵ Education is also to play its part in this sedative evolutionary process, in that it is construed here as a mechanism for imparting commitment to the major

cultural traditions. Innovation, in the form of artistic or scientific creation is admitted, but only it would appear, within the existing cultural parameters. No mention is made of possible fundamental economic or political change, indeed the conclusion of one of Parsons' papers on comparative sociology points to a contemporary trend Parsons discerns whereby, in the spirit of Rostow, Bell, and others, "older concerns with economic and even political problems are in course of being considerably relativized."⁴⁶

The evolutionary element within functionalist theory, however, had been, as Giddens has argued, attenuated since its incorporation in Durkheim. Indeed one symptom both of the functionalist school's general theoretical dominance in the post-war period, and its trend towards a more abstract, formal and static analysis, is the hope and interest demonstrated not only by functionalists themselves, but also by philosophers of science such as inter-alia E. Nagel, I. Scheffler, and C. Hempel, in the status of functionalism as a natural science of society. Both functionalists and the aforementioned philosophers of science were interested in the status of functionalism as a formal-rational explanatory system. According to both these groups functional analysis could largely be contrasted with historical forms of explanation; not only does functionalism largely bracket historical development (system maintenance having much more to do with the internal operation of the contemporary system) but, according to C. Hempel, relies on general laws.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the problem for functionalist analysis, its aim, is to show that a system(s) is operating under internal conditions (ci) and external conditions (ce) which together (c) operate such that an item or trait (i) has effects which satisfy a systemic need (n) or functional requirement. To use Hempel's widely-known terms, the Explanans consists of those pertinent laws and facts, or initial conditions (here C_1 and C_n) while the Explanandum, that which is to be explained according to the operation of the Explanans, is the operation of (i) in performing a functional requirement (n) which is necessary for the adequate, stable operation of the system.⁴⁸ We are talking here of explanation of social phenomena by "deductive assumption under general laws".⁴⁹ Of course, such deductive-nomological explanation can only operate given satisfactory criteria for establishing systemic needs, which precise items can fulfil such needs, and what is to be considered as normal functioning of the

system. Given this, analysis or explanation of a systemic - cultural phenomenon can perhaps be offered on the basis of its functioning within the system. Thus, to use an anthropological example, magic may perform a 'unique and necessary' function within a culture, although as indicated above, there may often be functional alternatives to any given unit (magic) within a system, just as in evolution there are multiple solutions possible at particular points. Functionalist explanation as a formal system of deductive inference, then, is of limited value in social analysis, if not practically implausible.

If, however, functionalist explanation, as we have seen, cannot be entirely explained according to deductive principles (since it is not possible to specify what Hempel calls the 'boundary conditions' or initial conditions, and there is always the possibility that another item may adequately fulfil the postulated systemic need), the possibility remains that functionalism can be defended on inductive principles, that is in terms of statistical probabilities. Unfortunately there is still the same possibility that another item (i) can very possibly fulfil the postulated systemic need (n), thus the previously outlined conditions for the operation of the system, even if considered as premisses, "taken jointly could still not be said to make the presence just of (i) highly probable."⁵⁰ As Hempel goes on to point out, unless it is possible to have access to a, universal or statistical, hypothesis of self-regulation such predictions or generalizations cannot be made. By a hypothesis of self-regulation Hempel intends a principle by which, within certain limits of adaptability, a given system will continue to satisfy the functional demands, necessary for its continued existence, that can arise from changes in its internal or external conditions. Examples of hypotheses of self-regulation which Hempel cites make clear the dependence on a broadly homeostatic assumption.⁵¹ Given, however, such an hypothesis, functionalist theory has been seen as having three objectives: explanation of past and present events; prediction or generalization regarding future events; and selection of "effective measures of control".⁵²

Although Hempel is ultimately somewhat sceptical as to the potential of functionalism as a complete formal system, this is by no means our only interest in his analysis, for it stands as a clear example

of scientific interest in functionalism as a 'natural science of society'. The exposition by Hempel demonstrates a clear technical interest in prediction and control, and reveals no interest in the lived experience of individuals in the system; or questions of value.

Before turning to an examination of functionalist influence in educational research, we must clarify one focus which has thus far been only implicit. The concepts of system, structure and function have been used in other theoretical contexts, notably L. van Bertalanffy's systems theory, and to some extent in recent, and generally French, structuralism. Although these traditions are distinct, the concept of the abstract and anti-humanist "applicability of rigorous models to social behaviour",⁵³ the over-determination of particular elements of the social whole by the structure of that whole,⁵⁴ and the impossibility of adequately containing human reflexive action by such "mechanical systems"⁵⁵ of explanation, make clear that criticisms of functionalism would be also largely applicable to structuralism and to Bertalanffy. The particular examination, then, of these theoretical structures will be deemed to be outside the scope of this study.

In education, the dominance of the functionalist paradigm for twentieth century, Anglo-Saxon educational research in the period up to approximately the nineteen-seventies has been broadly acknowledged. Although sociology of education has had a relatively strong research tradition, education tended to be conventionally viewed as an important sub-system with the function of providing skilled manpower for the wider system. The problem tended to be seen as merely one of increasing access to existing institutions, which were sometimes acknowledged to be overrepresented by members of particular classes. "The 'social class and educational opportunity' era was essentially one of structural functionalism."⁵⁶ This provoked increasing criticism, from at least the early nineteen-seventies, of the emphasis in traditional sociology of education whereby concepts and institutions were simply accepted. Now, by contrast, sociologists of education were to 'make' rather than simply 'take' their problems. This mooted reversal of interest from the problem of order to that of control⁵⁷ was an explicit rejection of the functionalist paradigm and its Hobbesian legacy. In particular, the new paradigm returned to eighteenth century views involving the

"critical questioning of whatever is taken as inviolable, whether 'God-given' or through 'natural law';" which was now directed against "a new absolutism, that of science and reason",⁵⁸ rather than the predominantly feudal and clerical constraints of the eighteenth century. Concepts, institutions and their interrelations were now to be seen as problematic; something to be explained rather than, as in the older functionalist paradigm, assumed.

Although a broad acceptance of the functionalist paradigm for research in much sociology of education of the post-war period at least has been adverted to by several authors,⁵⁹ one field of particular importance to comparative education will be selected as a case-study of functionalist influence. Modernization theorists of the post-war period exercised an important influence in proposing a view of education as a significant factor in development. The education system was often viewed as an important index of modernity, particularly in providing a reservoir of skilled manpower for technological progress; and in such models of development, universal and undefended concepts of 'system', a unilinear path for development, and an unchanging index or pattern of development was often found. But before turning to an examination of this corpus, we must pause to consider one of the few direct statements by a 'founding father' of comparative education on functionalism in comparative education.⁶⁰

N. Hans' article is not specifically rooted in any great analysis of core features of functionalism, nor in a consideration and adoption of a particular position based on a specific functionalist theorist. Indeed, the only allusion to the functionalist corpus is a citation of Malinowski's claim that the subject matter of anthropology was largely too complex to lend itself to 'scientific', statistical analysis. This view was clearly in accord with that of Hans, who argued that Comparative Education was as difficult and complex as anthropology. But in Hans' reference to Malinowski and in his, albeit brief, exposition of functionalism, he tends to contrast functional analysis with more scientific, or statistical, approaches which take little account of national diversity in their analyses and recommendations. This seems a rather uncommon characterization of functionalism, and is contradicted by inter alia Woock, who argues that most of the statistical research into education

of the last few decades was informed by generally functionalist assumptions.⁶¹ It appears that Hans may be reading his own views on methodology into his consideration of functionalism, as for example when he claims: "Comparative education is based on history and should be dealt with functionally, which is another way of saying historically."⁶² Having just considered the views of both an anthropologist and a philosopher of science who both clearly differentiated historical from functional analysis on the basis that the latter was a more formal system operating on the basis of certain scientific laws; and having characterized modern functionalism as becoming increasingly less developmental and more concerned with the internal analysis of relationships in a static system, Hans' assessment of functionalism seems difficult to accept.

In his application of what Hans takes to be functionalist explanation to the study of national education systems, however, it is possible to discern elements of functionalism, at least the anthropological strain to which Hans alludes. In his analysis, although he imparts a greater historical dimension than was perhaps the case for functionalist anthropologists, stress was placed, for example, on the adaptation of institutions to the national needs of the country. In so characterizing comparative education, Hans proceeds to look at the functions education was to serve in various societies, most particularly those related to the provision of technical personnel for manpower needs and economic growth. In examining various responses of countries to "the identical goal of industrialisation",⁶³ Hans seems to be operating with functionalist concepts of system. Education, it appears in his analysis, is merely a subsystem with a clear and uncritical function of pattern maintenance, that is servicing the technical requirements of the larger system. There seems little reciprocity in the relationship, nor any consideration of non-technicist values of education; the education system is simply to operate mechanically, as a cog in a given machine. Hans also appears in the above to be operating with a broadly unilinear model of development when referring to industrialisation as an identical problem in different contexts.

Turning now to studies of the process of modernisation in 'developing'⁶⁴ countries, it is possible to discern functionalist preoccupations in influential examples of the post-war period. David McClelland's major

effort in this field, The Achieving Society,⁶⁵ gives education an important role in his analysis of how to accelerate economic growth, and at the same time explains modernization in terms of Parsons' work on Weber's rationalization of life. By this, of course, Weber meant a lessening in a mystical or supernatural orientation to life, an increase in striving, orderliness, rigidity, orientation to work without reward, and other such features which he gave as characteristic of modern capitalist orientations. According to McClelland, this process of rationalization could be linked to the process of development: "... it seems reasonable enough to interpret Weber's argument for the connection between Protestantism and the rise of capitalism in terms of a revolution in the family, leading to more sons with strong internalized achievement drives." ⁶⁶

We have already noted in Parsons the importance of the process of rationalization, and McClelland's analysis explicitly depends upon Parsons "reformulations and developments of Weber's ideas." ⁶⁷ Increased division of labour, a more contractual style in social relations, a lessening of supernatural and spiritual influences, a corresponding increase in the tendency to be "coldly rational",⁶⁸ the substitution of material rather than spiritual forms of need and satisfaction, are all derived by McClelland from Parsons, and then transformed into items which together indicate 'need achievement', the basis of McClelland's modernization process. We clearly discern here not only the overall means-ends quality of rationality which is outlined by McClelland, and its dependence on Parsons, but at the same time we realize that the form of social rationalization described, involves, as with Weber, an emphasis, and perhaps defense, of values taken to be basic to the development of modern, western-capitalist society. McClelland's use of rationalization, which is in fact an amalgam of the Protestant-capitalist life-orientations and work values as his discussion makes clear, gives considerable cause for unease as a basis for a model of development. If development and modernization can be reduced to the adoption and implementation of a more technicist value-system based on what Feyerabend has called the unholy alliance of science, rationality and capitalism, then we may clearly discern in McClelland a functionalist definition of development as a unilinear evolutionary process leading towards western capitalism, and based on a definite set of assumptions which inhibit the development of social alternatives. Clearly, the

concept of rationality which underlies McClelland's concept of need achievement and modernization embraces a technocratic concern with questions of economic efficiency and the like, while eschewing those values of emancipation and human enlightenment which were at the core of the rationality concept that has been consistently advanced by figures such as Feyerabend and Habermas.

McClelland's discussion of the role of education in development bears out the consistent preoccupation with western, technological rationality as a means for increasing need achievement, although his assessment of the results of such exposure is ambiguous. Although pointing to the fact that educational institutions with an emphasis on western rationality-concepts have been influential in producing political and industrial leaders of third-world nations, with increased 'need achievement', his own analysis reveals no great evidence that western-rational schooling has much effect on 'need achievement' scores. This leads McClelland to the view that such forms of schooling ought perhaps to begin earlier, perhaps in the elementary years; and ought perhaps to be associated with broader changes such as that of family-style and general "ideological conversion".⁶⁹ Nowhere in McClelland's discussion of exposure to foreign "educational influences which might increase in Achievement",⁷⁰ is there any great discussion of the notion of primacy of respect for the cultural values of the recipient of western schooling. Indeed, McClelland's only admission of the possibility of disruption of personality-structures under such forms of western educational influence indicates his primary concern is with the technical efficiency of various modes of cultural interaction and their effect on need-achievement scores, rather than any fundamental discussion of the ethics of such cultural concourse. Indeed the entire discussion of education by McClelland is imbued with a functional means-ends, instrumentalist flavour, whereby questions are limited to choices of strategies with which most efficiently to achieve such assumed targets as the provision of a given level of technical or managerial manpower. Educational sub-systems are then, to use the language of functionalism, simply one unit within the larger system; and schooling simply exists to obey the technical imperatives of the larger organism by providing legions of skilled personnel tarred with whatever ideological brush is deemed desirable. The functionalist concern with efficiency, at the expense of ethics, is readily apparent, as is the conception of social change as adaptive.

We see some of these concerns in another influential work of the nineteen-sixties, which although not restricting itself to the process of modernization and development, devotes a considerable part of its content to the problems of the 'developing world', from a systems-analytic perspective. Philip Coombs The World Educational Crisis⁷¹ is one of the more important works to employ this perspective; through his work we are able to study the extent to which his concept of system appears to show any allegiance to the concept as employed in functionalist theory, and secondly the extent to which his use of systems-theory to analyze 'development' is informed by other functionalist intellectual conventions such as technicist rationalization, a broadly unilinear conception of development, and an emphasis on conservation and homeostasis.

Demonstrably, Coombs' concept of system is largely explicable by reference to functionalist employment of the concept. The initial description of education as "a system with interacting parts" stresses the interaction of sub-units of the larger system, and his subsequent use of clarificatory examples reinforces the notion of functional interdependence of sub-units of the system. A change to one item or sub-unit of the system, as in the case of a change in curriculum, or a change in aims or priorities, will often have a significant effect on other items within the system, such as distribution of resources, allocation or choice of students, and so on. At times, "virtually every component is substantially affected by such a change."⁷²

A further link to the functionalist use of system is contained in the recognition that explanation and analysis cannot be limited to a consideration of factors internal to the system. On the contrary, understanding of "the internal components of the system, detached from the environment"⁷³ is inadequate, and educational systems analysis must incorporate relationships between education and society, which are reciprocal, and not limited to any rigid pattern of response on the part of the education system.

Although the articulation of system as responsive or adaptive to both internal and external changes may be seen as an implicit acceptance of a biological model of system, it is possible to locate more direct evidence of the adoption of this feature of functionalist use of system in Coombs' work. Perhaps the major analogy Coombs uses to illustrate

his concept of system is with that of the human body. Although, Coombs argues, a doctor can never have full knowledge of a patient's human biological "system and its functional processes",⁷⁴ he performs his diagnosis on the basis of indicators which allow him to "appraise the way the total system is functioning, and (to) prescribe .. what may be needed to make it function better."⁷⁵ Similarly, educational management seeks to elicit indicators which reveal the state of operation of an educational system, so as to increase its systemic efficiency: "... if one is to assess the health of an education system in order to improve its performance and to plan its future intelligently, the relationship between its critical components must be examined in a unified vision".⁷⁶

The ideology of strategic rationality on which Coombs' analysis rests becomes readily apparent when, for example, it is argued that the education system can be analyzed and managed in just the same manner as a range of institutions, "everything from department stores to military establishments".⁷⁷ The refrain may vary slightly it would appear, but the song remains the same: "The 'indicators' differ from context to context, but the strategy remains the same".⁷⁸ The strategic nature of the application of a Parsonsian style means-ends rationality for the organisation of education is further reinforced in Coombs' argument that education is an adaptive unit of a larger system, whose function it must uncritically serve. Coombs' major, indeed sole preoccupation here, to the exclusion of claims of the inherent value of education is that the process of education simply "be made more relevant, efficient and effective within the context of the particular society".⁷⁹ This conception of education is surely at the heart of the functionalist research traditions in which education is simply an adaptive sub-unit whose function it is to mechanically service the intrinsic needs of the social system, most particularly with respect to the function of providing skilled manpower in the requisite quantity.

Coombs' hypostatized education system functions within a generally reified social system such as exists in Parsons. For Coombs, the

major components of an educational system, including such "resource inputs"⁸⁰ as 'students', and 'teachers' can simply be listed, then fed into a black box described as the 'education process', whence emerge 'educational outputs' known as 'educated individuals', or 'manpower requirements'. It is largely because of his reified system-concept one suspects, that Coombs is driven to argue that social demand for education must inevitably increase, even despite economic changes, or changes to the level of resources devoted to education.

Despite talk of social demand, democratisation and the like, it may reasonably be inferred that in speaking of 'student inputs' and 'teacher inputs', Coombs' implicitly accepts the technicist ideology of the functionalist fold, by employing abstract, mechanical, anti-humanist models in social analysis, and by his emphasis on the determination of education by the social system. A dialectical, reflexive concept of man is entirely absent from Coombs' educational equation, nor is much weight given to education as form of personal, and critical liberation. The aim of knowledge, and of the education system for Coombs seems almost entirely to be the satisfaction of assumed technical wants of the social system, most particularly its manpower requirements. The discussion of teachers is very largely in economic terms: not only supply and demand, levels of qualifications salary levels vis á vis other professions; but also "hard economic facts"⁸¹ such as education being a mass-production, labour intensive industry supported by only handicraft technology, the ageing of the teaching profession relative to costs of pensions and automatic increases, and the pecuniary costs to 'developing' countries of making their teaching body more indigenous. The mathematical, mechanistic manner in which Coombs analyses processes of decision in respect of teachers, and wider questions of educational planning, clearly reveals a covert reliance upon a technicist ideology in which values of efficiency and economy are largely unchallenged. More basic questions of personal fulfilment and liberation, as also the wider and more ethical dimensions to education, are rendered invisible in the analogy of the planning process to a self-regulating, self-propelling system or machine. There is no room in Coombs' analysis for the concept of an autonomous human being with feelings, interests,

and aspirations. There can be no room for autonomous human beings in techno-logically, econometrically restricted discussions of education and its aims, and it is here that Habermasian arguments as to the submerging of practical questions into technical, decisionistic considerations, as also his arguments on systematically distorted communication patterns have peculiar force.⁸²

The consensus that education was an important factor in general strategies for economic development and political modernisation achieved almost paradigmatic status in modernisation literature of the first two decades or more after nineteen forty-five. Indeed, some examples of this literature purported to be design-blueprints for development, and analyses only secondarily. Certainly, one of the more obvious and well-known products of such strategically-oriented thinkers was Harbison and Myers' Education, Manpower and Economic Growth.⁸³ The emphasis in this work was on the development or exploitation of human resources as a vital ingredient in economic development. Human resources were from this view "a form of capital, a produced means of production, and the product of investment."⁸⁴ Given this econometric conception, it is no surprise that education was seen throughout as a basic tool of manpower planning strategy. Hence also the focus of the work could be given as the analysis of the ... means and possible strategies of human capital formation"⁸⁵ as a promoter of economic growth. Here again, although human resource development was acknowledged to be conceivable in other than economic terms, the subsequent substantive discussion of the theory and methodology of human resource development was almost entirely in econometric and strategic terms. Education was a form of capital like any other, and could be employed in quite the same strategically-oriented manner.⁸⁶ It need be considered in no other manner than in terms of its strategic potential.

The scientific techno-logic which informed the discussion of development, and the contribution of education, was implicit throughout Harbison and Myers' work. The postwar phenomenon of worldwide aspirations towards development, for example, was explained in the context of "the optimistic conviction that man in this century

of science, can move forward by leaps instead of steps."⁸⁷ This enlightenment faith in the onward march of progress and its dependence upon the powers of a scientifically ensured rationality omitted any fundamental discussion of values, even its own. Thus the process of development could be seen as merely a design problem, rather like an engineer building a bridge. The open and unrestrained discussion of values or the ends of development, or indeed the role and kind of education deemed desirable, was all bracketed out in the rush to attain the nirvana of technological progress. The inbuilt assumption in this technicist vision of progress was, of course, recognizable as the conventional functionalist assumption of a unilinear path to a brighter and better, more rationalized world, in which problems of all kinds were to be solved in the most technically efficient manner. This selfsame vision of a technorationally ordered society has been seen by other, more critically oriented, scholars ⁸⁸ as accurately describing the modern, western-capitalist state, with its conception of the paramountcy of scientific reason expressed in terms of a decisionistic concern with economy and efficiency in human affairs. The possibility that many nations had no great desire to progress toward this goal was overlooked, and modernization models viewed development as the simple application of rational-scientific planning procedures to the process of becoming modern. This unilinear process of modernisation included as twin aspects a functionalist postulate of progressively changing cultural values and institutions: "For them, modernization theory predicts all change. They posit that societies continually strive for economic and social rationality which maximizes productive social resources. Social change is unidirectional and consists of the movement from simple to increasingly complex social organization; from functionally diffuse to functionally specific institutions; from lesser to greater divisions of labour; from social systems of stratification based on ascription to those based on individual achievement; from belief and legal systems that are particularistic and fatalistic to those that are universalistic and subject to human control."⁸⁹

One could go on. It is not difficult to find further examples of modernization theorists who have been important in the development of postwar comparative education, an importance not unrelated to the tacit or explicit adoption of the functionalist paradigm. The

preoccupation with 'becoming modern' ⁹⁰ was widespread in the postwar period, and theorists often embraced unilinear models of societal development, used a priori and uncritical system concepts, emphasized the rationalisation of human existence, saw value-free social inquiry as their aim and duty, and in general worked within the parameters of the functionalist tradition inherited from Durkheim and Parsons, and whose genealogy can be traced back to the Enlightenment. There were, however, alternatives to the adoption of the functionalist paradigm, which began to emerge from around the early nineteen-seventies ⁹¹ and in the process of their establishment criticized the limitations and errors of the older functionalist school. Some of these criticisms can now be made explicit, although without necessarily limiting the criticisms to those advanced by Carnoy or a newer generation of comparative scholars. The analysis of these shortcomings, however, will reflect a more critical orientation to the development of comparative education, and is connected at several points to the view of social theory advanced by Habermas, and the critique of positivism and rationalism developed in the natural sciences by Feyerabend.

The fundamental importance of the system concept deserves our immediate attention. We have observed in both the founding fathers of functionalism, and in several modernization theorists, the use of an a priori, and uncritically held system concept, usually taken from biological models of system. The use of such a formal model is itself an important product of the move to make the study, and the reform, of education more 'scientific' and the world in general more 'rational'. In so doing however, one of the most acute dangers is the adoption of a false, technicist value-system which is often present in the natural sciences, ⁹² but disastrously constrains the development of the social-sciences. The a priori functionalist system-concept tends also to embody reified systemic needs, which together encourage the employment of a means-ends rationality, which appears fruitful just because it promises to be so effective and economical in the solution of 'society's problems'. But this is of course the point: we cannot solve 'society's problems', when these have been arbitrarily determined in advance; and in the satisfaction

of genuine wants in society, we must allow more than a set of technical rules determine the judgement. In functionalist analysis, reified problems tend to be solved, on paper, by the adoption of equally reified sets of rules for their solution. It is as though one were to want to rid oneself of a phantom by using a poltergeist.

But it is not merely that problems, and rules for solutions, are reified in functionalism. It is important to emphasize Habermas' point here, echoed in the natural sciences by Feyerabend, that rationalist projects to devise transcendental rules for the solution of problems are in fact the embrace of a set of technocratic values, rather than an act of value-free social inquiry. Under the functionalist flag of value-free sociology a panoply of scientific values are revealed, emphasizing efficiency and economy, regardless of ethics. We see our modernization theorists, for example, giving as one of the quintessential features of 'modern man' a 'coldly rational' demeanour, and using this as a stick with which to beat more 'primitive' societies in which ethics formed a more visible everyday constraint upon action. Both reification and a technocratic scientism are insistent features of functionalist explanations in the social sciences.

The biological model of system in functionalist theory is employed in a telling manner in actual examples of functionalist-inspired research. The use of an (implicitly) unilinear evolutionary path to modernity is an important feature of modernization theorists. The unholy alliance, as we have used the term, of science, rationality and capitalism provides the basis for this evolution, and no society can be judged truly modern until it has been conquered by this triple-alliance. Accordingly, modern man is usually judged in terms of his ability to embrace a scientific outlook, to admire people according to their technical expertise, to embrace mass productive techniques as well as the institutions and relationships which pertain to them. Are these the shining examples of modernity we would wish to hold up for our children to admire and emulate? Are these the institutional models and values we would wish all peoples to adopt? The brave new world which functionalist authors offer as a blueprint for 'modernizing' societies is an unfeeling, cheerless, even chilling, society peopled by similarly bleak individuals who have been rationalized to blend

unquestioningly into an architectonic environment. Parsons' dependence upon Weberian rationalisation proved an attractive ideology for functionalist social scientists; the view of society which functionalists then painted was not nearly as attractive.

The last, if not the least, feature of the functionalist deployment of the system concept was its organic, unifying quality. Stemming from Comte and enlightenment theorists, this feature also denoted, as with its forbears, a disrelish for profound social changes, most particularly those which related to social conflict. The functionalist system as used in Parsons and in many modernization theorists was an integrative healing force which overtly and covertly stabilized society and sedated social conflict. In effect, this legitimated the dampening of popular political expression, and encouraged an instrumentalist view of sub-systems of action. Education, as an example of such a subsystem of action, thus tended to be construed and judged solely in terms of its ability to serve the assumed technical wants of the larger system, particularly those which contributed to its stable continuity. Education could hardly contribute to change at all, since it was normatively subordinate: its norms were uncritically taken over from those of the larger system. Education, indeed, was principally important as a vehicle for normative transmission to smaller units of the system such as schools or 'actors', rather than as a source for change. Here again, we are able to discern an antiseptic, and altogether too harmonious view of social change in the work of functionalist authors in education. Social change was only unproblematic within functionalism by virtue of being rationalized and over simplified, such that much change was designated dysfunctional, and to be opposed.

But if sociology can be construed as a sedative science, education is no longer seen as such, and it is perhaps here that the central problem lies. We are now, more than ever, aware that education is inherently political, and as each new study enhances our understanding of the relationship between ideology and curriculum,⁹³ social class and education,⁹⁴ politics and the I.Q. controversy,⁹⁵ ideology and research,⁹⁶ or education and cultural and economic reproduction,⁹⁷ we are the less inclined to accept the analytical constraints of functionalist explanations in education. We are now also less likely

to accept that sociology ought to be a natural science of society; or that science is the synonym for rationality; or that rationalism and rationalization are necessarily rational. And if we have grown, as a result of our analysis of functionalist theory and research, a little more skeptical in regard to the beneficent power of the onward march of uncontrolled reason in society, the possibility of formalizing social analysis, or the unproblematic, consensual normative basis for order in society, then perhaps functionalism has served us well. As researchers in education, there is much we may learn from studying the pitfalls of our forbears.

NOTES

- ¹ See Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, Free Press (Collier Macmillan) 1964, p. 145: "We have .. undertaken to establish that it is possible to treat (social facts) .. scientifically without removing any of their distinctive characteristics".
- ² See Giddens, A. "Positivism and its Critics", Bottomore and Nisbet A History of Sociological Analysis, Heinemann 1979, p. 244, citing Durkheim and Fauconnet, 'Sociologie et Sciences Sociales' Revue philosophique 55, 1903.
- ³ Tiryakian, E. A. 'Emile Durkheim', Bottomore and Nisbet A History .. p. 188.
- ⁴ Ibid. p. 190.
- ⁵ See inter alia Zeitlin, I., Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory (2nd edition) Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1981, p. 254.
- ⁶ See Parsons, T., The Structure of Social Action New York, The Free Press, 1949, pp. 89 - 91 on the question of order. See also Parsons, T., et. al, Theories of Society, New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1961. Vol. I, pp. 99 - 101 for a brief extract from Hobbes.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 91.
- ⁸ Ibid., pp. 88 - 9.
- ⁹ Durkheim, The Rules .. p. 56.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 56.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 58.
- ¹² Ibid., p. 50.
- ¹³ Parsons, T., Essays in Sociological Theory, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1949, p. 21.
- ¹⁴ See Durkheim, E., The Division of Labour in Society Collier-Macmillan 1964, where increasing differentiation is seen as a concomitant of technological progress, as expressing interdependence of sub-units and organic solidarity, indeed the source for civilization itself. See pp. 39 - 50, and chapters II and III.
- ¹⁵ See for example, Parsons, The Structure.. pp. 492 - 3.
- ¹⁶ Although interdependence seems central. See Moore, W. E., 'Functionalism' in Bottomore and Nisbet A History.. p. 323.
- ¹⁷ See ibid. pp. 76 - 7; and also pp. 44 - 5 for the normative basis of action. See also Essays.. pp. 29 - 30,
- ¹⁸ Gouldner, A., The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology Heinemann 1971, p. 218.

19

Parsons, et. al. Theories.. p. 43. See pp. 43 - 44 for the view that more all-embracing collectivities are normatively superordinate with respect to smaller or more particular units in the system.

20

See Parsons' reference to the concept in the work of Cannon, in his discussion of the equilibrium question, Parsons, Theories.., I. p. 37. Significantly, Parsons later changed to a cybernetic account of knowledge and information control. See his paper on the biological analogy in Social Systems and the Evaluation of Action Theory New York, The Free Press, 1977.

21

Gouldner, The Coming.. p. 211.

22

Ibid., p. 231.

23

Parsons, T., The Social System, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1951, p. 205.

24

Parsons, Theories.. p. 37.

25

Ibid., p. 38.

26

Ibid., p. 38.

27

Ibid., p. 39.

28

Ibid., p. 40.

29

Ibid., p. 40. See also Parsons, T., "The Present Status of 'Structural-Functional' Theory in Sociology", Coser, L.A. (ed.) The Idea of Social Structure: Papers in Honour of Robert K. Merton New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1975.

30

Gouldner, A., For Sociology. Renewal and Critique in Sociology Today. Allen Lane 1973, p. 3.

31

Moore, a 'chastened, penitent' functionalist affirms this preoccupation with the theme of order and change in the context of "new forms of social interdependence established by a highly rationalized economy and polity: Moore, 'Functionalism', p.325.

32

Parsons The Structure.. p. 594. See also p. 638 (ff) for the defense of value-freedom in the sciences.

33

Ibid., p. 594. But note that even Parsons, ardent fidel defensor of value-free sociology, criticizes Weber for failing to acknowledge value-attitudes in the natural sciences, whereas Parsons uses them to explain different scientific traditions. See Ibid., p. 596.

34

Ibid., p. 58.

35

Ibid., p. 58. See also p. 170.

36

Ibid., p. 699.

37

See Moore's discussion of his own account of innovation within his version of functionalism, Moore, 'Functionalism' p. 330, and Merton's structuralism which began from structures and studied their implications for other structures and wider systems. See Blau, P.M., 'Structural Constraints of Status Complements' in Coser, (ed.) The Idea.., esp. Pp. 117 - 118.

- 38 An example of this latter interpretation is Kingsley Davis' "Human Society", New York, Macmillan 1949.
- 39 See Merton, R. K., Social Theory and Social Structure Glencoe, The Free Press 1957, pp. 51 - 3, and Levy, M.J. (Jr) The Structure of Society Princeton, Princeton University Press 1952 pp. 76 - 83.
- 40 Moore 'Functionalism', p. 343.
- 41 These are taken from Levy's work, but also briefly reviewed in Moore, and are present in other forms in other functionalist theorists.
- 42 Moore 'Functionalism' p. 347.
- 43 See *ibid.* pp. 350 - 1.
- 44 Parsons, T., Societies. Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives. New Jersey, Prentice Hall 1966, p. 30, but see also p. 6 for an expanded formulation. For more on Parsons' developmental view of societies, see his 'Evolutionary Universals in Society', American Sociological Review, 29, 1964.
- 45 Moore, 'Functionalism' p. 328. The link between functionalist assumptions and concepts of modernization in educational research will be treated shortly. The work alluded to is, of course, Rostow W. W., Stages of Economic Growth Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- 46 See Parsons, T., 'Some Considerations on the Comparative Sociology', Fischer, J. (Ed.) 'The Social Sciences and the Comparative Study of Educational Systems', Scranton, International Text Book Company 1970 p. 220. See also p.201 for the view of education described.
- 47 Hempel also cites A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's assessment in his Structure and Function in Primitive Society London, Cohen and West 1952, p. 186: "Similarly one 'explanation' of a social system will be its history, where we know it - the detailed account of how it came to be what it is and where it is. Another 'explanation' of the same system is obtained by showing (as the functionalists attempt to do) that it is a special exemplification of laws of social psychology or social functioning." While not being as sanguine as Radcliffe-Brown that the two modes of discourse do not compete, the bifurcation is a useful one.
- 48 For fuller descriptions of Hempel's terminology see his Aspects of Scientific Explanation New York, The Free Press 1965. Formally $(L_1 \dots L_n) \text{ plus } (C_1 \dots C_n) \rightarrow \text{deduction of } E \text{ (explanandum)}$ The form of logic is, then, nomological, which can for Hempel be either deductive (strong form) or inductive (weak form).
- 49 Hempel, C., 'The Logic of Functional Analysis', Brodbeck, Readings.. p. 181.

- 50 Ibid., p. 194. To be fair Merton, at least, recognized the possibility of functional substitutes of institutions or units of a system. See Merton Social.. Pp. 86 - 91, 106 - 108.
- 51 Here Hempel again cites Radcliffe-Brown Structure.. p. 183: "a society that is thrown into a condition of functional disunity or inconsistency ... will not die except in .. comparatively rare instances ..., but will continue to struggle toward ... some kind of social health."
- 52 Hempel, 'The Logic..', p. 199 citing the work of H.A. Murray and C. Kluckhohn on personality.
- 53 Bottomore, T. and Nisbet, R., 'Structuralism', Bottomore and Nisbet A History.. p. 591.
- 54 See Kolakowski, L., 'Althusser's Marx' The Socialist Register 1971, p. 124.
- 55 Giddens, A., Central Problems in Social Theory Macmillan 1979, p. 75. See also Blauberger, I.V., Sadovsky, V.N., and Yudin, E.G., Systems Theory. Philosophical and Methodological Problems. Moscow, Progress Publishers 1977.
- 56 Eggleston, J., (ed.) Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education Methuen 1974, p. 7.
- 57 By which is meant an emphasis on the imposition of meaning, with a stress on interaction. In this way it is particularly concerned with the disposition of, and access to, power which is distinct from the functionalist concept of social control. See Dawe, 'The Two Sociologies' British Journal of Sociology XXI, 2, 1970.
- 58 Young M.F.D., Knowledge and Control Collier-Macmillan 1971 p. 3. "Today it is the commonsense conceptions of the 'scientific' and the 'rational', together with the various social, political and educational beliefs, that are assumed to follow from them that represent the dominant legitimizing categories." Ibid.
- 59 See, for example, the critical introduction to Karabel, J., and Halsey, A.H., Power and Ideology in Education, Oxford University Press 1979. See Bernbaum, G., Knowledge and Ideology in the Sociology of Education Macmillan 1977, pp. 17 - 19 for the assessment that functionalism was not the sole or whole feature of research in sociology of education of the post-war period.
- 60 Hans, N., 'Functionalism in Comparative Education', International Review of Education, 10, 1, 1964.
- 61 See Woock, R., 'Integrated Social Theory and Comparative Education', International Review of Education, 27, 4, 1981.
- 62 Hans 'Functionalism', p. 94.
- 63 Ibid., p. 96.

- ⁶⁴ The use of terms such as 'underdeveloped' or 'developing', is itself a demonstration of a unilinear evolutionary path for national development, as we shall presently detail. For the functionalist basis of post-war modernization research in general see, for example, the dependence upon Parsons' Pattern variables in Almond, G.A. and Coleman, J. S., The Politics of the Developing Areas Princeton, Princeton U.P. 1960.
- ⁶⁵ McClelland D. C., The Achieving Society D. Van Nostrand Co. 1961. For another, if brief, assessment of the functionalist basis for modernization theory, see Tipps, D.C. "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A critical perspective", Comparative Studies in Society and History, 15, 2, 1973.
- ⁶⁶ McClelland, The Achieving.. p. 49.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 173.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 174.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 416.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 416.
- ⁷¹ Coombs, P. H., The World Educational Crisis. A Systems Analysis, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 8.
- ⁷² Ibid., p. 10.
- ⁷³ Ibid., p. 10.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 8.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 8.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 9.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 8.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 8 - 9.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 9.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 35.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., p. 35.
- ⁸² As we have argued before, Feyerabend's strictures on non-hegemonic forms of decision making, and the restriction of open discussions to within the parameters of instrumental reason afford much the same critique. I have focussed here only on the analysis of teachers in Coombs, but the examination of other 'resource inputs', 'outputs', manpower, management, or costs and efficiency would not negate the basic critique offered in this paper.

- ⁸³ Harbison, F., and Myers, C. A. Education, Manpower and Economic Growth McGraw Hill 1964. The same perspective is equally evident in the introductory section of their subsequent Manpower and Education McGraw Hill 1965. See the foreword of the former work, page v, for the claim of the work to be a blueprint for action.
- ⁸⁴ Harbison and Myers, Manpower..., p.ix. The economist upon whose views the analysis depends, is given as T.W. Schultz, in particular his work on investment in human capital.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.p. ix; see also p. xi for expressed aims of "building an effective strategy for human resource development.."
- ⁸⁶ See Harbison and Myers, Education..., Pp. 3 et seq. where the 'economic analysis of investment in man' is considered in terms of major economists' views on the subject, and theoretical attempts to tease out the (residual) contribution to economic growth of investment in education.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 1.
- ⁸⁸ Inter alia, Carnoy, M., Education as Cultural Imperialism, 1974; Altbach, P., and Kelly, G. Education and Colonialism, 1973; Arnove, R., Altbach, P., and Kelly, G., Comparative Education, 1932 and Arnove, R. Philanthropy as Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad, 1980.
- ⁸⁹ Kelly, G. P., Altbach, P. G., and Arnove, R. F., 'Trends in Comparative Education: A Critical Analysis', in Altbach, P.G., Arnove, R. F., and Kelly, G. P., Comparative Education Collier Macmillan 1982, p. 516. The link here to earlier functionalist studies of other cultures alluded to in this paper is obvious. See references to Durkheim's treatment of Australian aboriginal society and Almond and Coleman's use of Parsons' pattern variables, above.
- ⁹⁰ To borrow the title of yet another work in the field, Inkeles, A., and Smith, D. A., Becoming Modern, Heinemann, London 1974. These authors were still trying to define the 'modern man' in the same year as Martin Carnoy's Education as Cultural Imperialism was being published. Moreover, their concept of modern man viewed him as necessarily linked to large-scale productive enterprises, and with an increased faith in 'science and related remedies'. The basic unit of learning in the work of Inkeles and Smith, seemed to be the factory. For the above views, see chapter two, especially Pp. 19, 28 et passim.
- ⁹¹ See Kelly, Altbach and Arnove 'Trends in ..', Pp. 506, 515 that modernization theory was one of the major theoretical foundations for comparative education in the 1960s and early 1970s.
- ⁹² Although wrongly, as Feyerabend argues. Science is not a matter of technical-rational rules.

- ⁹³ Apple, M. W. Ideology and Curriculum Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979.
- ⁹⁴ Willis, P., Learning to Labour. How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs, Gower Publishing Co. Ltd., 1980 (1977).
- ⁹⁵ Matthews, M., The Marxist Theory of Schooling, Brighton Harvester, 1980.
- ⁹⁶ Karabel, J., and Halsey, A., (Eds) Power and Ideology in Education Oxford University Press, 1977.
- ⁹⁷ Apple, M. W., Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.